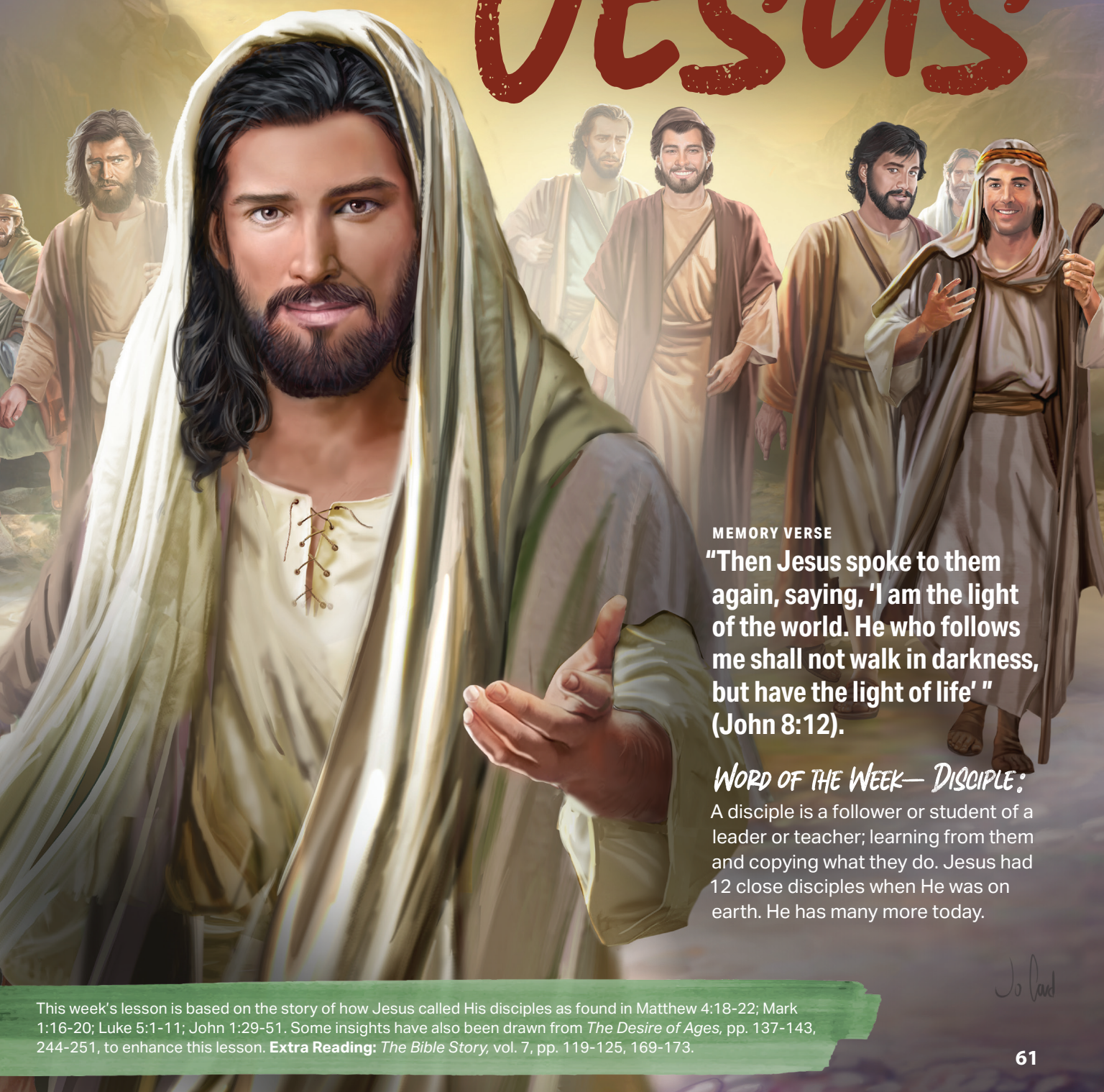
JESUS LOVES ME SO MUCH HE CALLS ME TO FOLLOW HIM.

CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS



MEMORY VERSE

"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life' " (John 8:12).

WORD OF THE WEEK— DISCIPLE:

A disciple is a follower or student of a leader or teacher; learning from them and copying what they do. Jesus had 12 close disciples when He was on earth. He has many more today.

This week's lesson is based on the story of how Jesus called His disciples as found in Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:29-51. Some insights have also been drawn from *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 137-143, 244-251, to enhance this lesson. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 119-125, 169-173.

SUNDAY

Two Fishermen

Jesus wound His way down the rocky desert trail and out of the lonely wilderness. Relying on God's Word, He had won the victory over Satan's temptations. Fed and revived by angels, He headed back to the Jordan River.

As He came closer to the river, Jesus heard the familiar voice of John the Baptist preaching to the people. Joining them, He mingled with the crowds, trying not to attract attention. But John spotted Him anyway.

God's glory lit up John's face, and his voice once again boomed out the words "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! . . . I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:29-34).

Full of wonder and awe, the people stared at Jesus. *Could this really be the Messiah?* they wondered. Jesus was dressed in the simple clothes of the working class, likely worn and weathered from His time in the wilderness. He looked so ordinary, so poor, so much like them. *Where were His kingly robes? Shouldn't He look like a powerful and proud leader who could drive out the Roman rulers?* Many in the crowd were disappointed and turned away.

But others saw more; much more than a poor, humble man. They noticed Jesus' eyes. Kindness, gentleness, and indescribable love shone out from those eyes and reached their hearts. Even the atmosphere around Jesus seemed holy. Like a magnet to metal, they were drawn to Him. John the Baptist had preached to prepare them for this very moment, and now their hearts were full.

Jesus came to this earth as a poor, humble person so that His love and compassion could reach everyone, including those who were poor, vulnerable, or lonely. How did Jesus explain His mission later? **Read Matthew 20:28.**

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Have you been quick to judge someone based on how they looked or what they were wearing?*
- *What does this story teach you?*

Mission Challenge: Share Jesus' love by praying each day this week for the people who received your Sabbath School gifts. Pray that they may come to know and love Jesus.

Pray: Thank God that Jesus' love and compassion have reached your heart too.

Do: Quietly sing "Jesus Loves Me" as you think about Jesus in today's story.

MONDAY

"We Have Found the Messiah!"

The day after seeing Jesus return to the Jordan River, John the Baptist saw Him again. A smile lit up his face as he shouted, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36).

Two fisherman, Andrew and John, heard John's bold words about Jesus. They wondered what "the Lamb of God" meant. They longed to find out, so they followed Jesus.

Hearing John and Andrew's footsteps behind Him, Jesus turned and said, "What do you seek?" (John 1:38). Then what happened? **Read John 1:38, 39.**

Imagine the wonderful time those two friends had sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to Him speak. They had recognized the Holy Spirit in John the Baptist's preaching; now they heard the same Spirit in Jesus' voice. John and Andrew knew that Jesus truly *was* the Messiah and that He loved them very much. They had followed Him with their feet; now they followed Him with their hearts. They were the first to follow Jesus, and it made Him very glad.

Andrew couldn't wait to tell his brother the good news! Excitement rippled through him as he ran to find Simon. "We have found the Messiah!" he cried. "And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:41, 42). Jesus welcomed Simon right away and gave him a new name to suit the good things in his character. He would now be called "Peter," which means "stone."

After John and Andrew followed Jesus, they spent time with Him, getting to know Him. This is the most important thing for us to do when we follow Jesus too. He calls us to be His friend and learn from Him. Then, when we truly know He is our Savior, our hearts will bubble over with His love, and we will want to tell our family and friends how awesome Jesus is. Just like Jesus, we will say to them, "Come and see" (John 1:39); come and get to know Jesus for yourself.

Do: When it's nighttime, turn on an outside light and watch how moths are drawn toward the light. Think about how John and Andrew were drawn to Jesus: they couldn't help following Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *What made Andrew and John want to follow Jesus?*
- *What questions would you ask Jesus if you could sit at His feet, as Andrew and John did?*

Pray: Thank Jesus for the things that make you want to follow Him.



☐ TUESDAY

"Follow Me!"

As Jesus walked along the dusty road toward Galilee, He saw Philip and said, "Follow Me" (John 1:43). And Philip did, simple as that. But not before running off to call his friend Nathanael to come and meet the Messiah too.

Do: Shine a flashlight in the dark for a family member to follow as you lead them. Think about following Jesus, the light.

Nathanael had been among the crowd when John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God. He had been disappointed with the way Jesus looked and wasn't sure if He really truly was the Messiah or not. He was under a fig tree praying for God to show him, when Philip told him the good news—he had found the Messiah! "We have found him. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph. He is from Nazareth" (John 1:45, ICB).

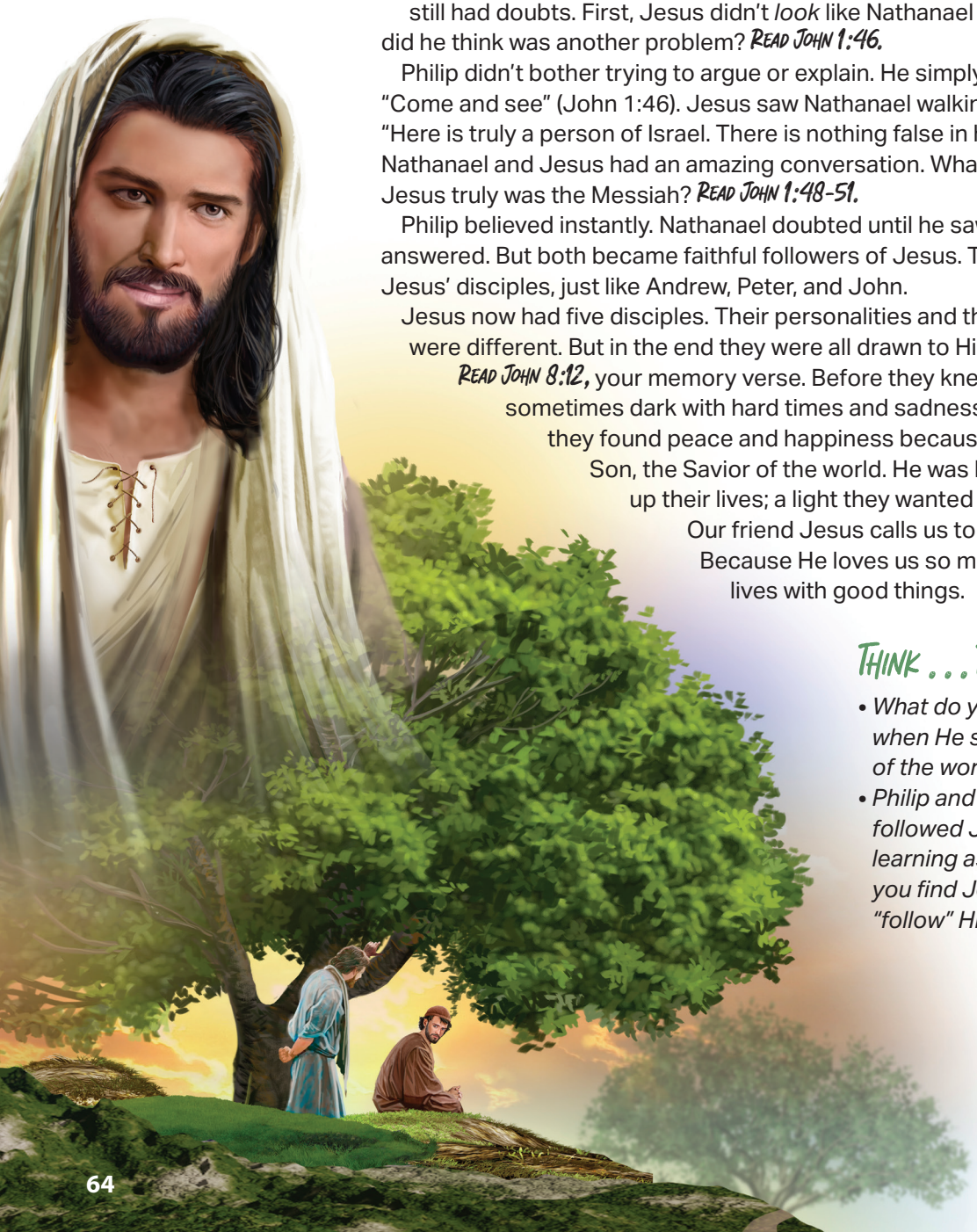
The words seemed like a direct answer to his prayer, and yet . . . Nathanael still had doubts. First, Jesus didn't *look* like Nathanael thought He should. What did he think was another problem? **Read John 1:46.**

Philip didn't bother trying to argue or explain. He simply used the words of Jesus: "Come and see" (John 1:46). Jesus saw Nathanael walking toward Him, and He said, "Here is truly a person of Israel. There is nothing false in him" (John 1:47, ICB). Then Nathanael and Jesus had an amazing conversation. What convinced Nathanael that Jesus truly was the Messiah? **Read John 1:48-51.**

Philip believed instantly. Nathanael doubted until he saw that his prayer was answered. But both became faithful followers of Jesus. They became known as Jesus' disciples, just like Andrew, Peter, and John.

Jesus now had five disciples. Their personalities and their call to follow Jesus were different. But in the end they were all drawn to Him like moths to a light. **Read John 8:12,** your memory verse. Before they knew Jesus, their lives were sometimes dark with hard times and sadness. When Jesus called them, they found peace and happiness because they knew He was God's Son, the Savior of the world. He was like a light that brightened up their lives; a light they wanted to follow.

Our friend Jesus calls us to follow Him in the light too. Because He loves us so much, He wants to fill our lives with good things.



Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What do you think Jesus meant when He said He was the light of the world?*
- *Philip and Nathanael physically followed Jesus, watching and learning as they went. Where can you find Jesus now, and how can you "follow" Him?*

Pray: Thank Jesus for being a light to follow.



WEDNESDAY

Where Are All the Fish?

In the early-morning quiet, four disappointed disciples pulled their boats onto the sandy shore and began to wash their nets. Peter, Andrew, John, and his brother, James, had fished all night and caught nothing—not even one tiny fish. Peter was especially discouraged.

Time had passed since Jesus had called them to follow Him. Peter had seen Jesus perform miracles and great wonders. But jealous Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus and made life difficult; even John the Baptist had been thrown into prison. Things didn't seem to be going to plan—and now he couldn't even catch a fish!

Jesus came walking along the beach with a huge crowd of followers. Seeing Peter's boat, Jesus stepped into it and began to teach the people about God's love and how they could be saved from their sins. Old men with walking sticks, muscular farmers, fishermen, teachers, sick people, and children all crowded close to hear Jesus' wonderful words of peace.

When Jesus had finished teaching, He spoke to Peter. What did He say? *Read Luke 5:4.*

Peter looked at Jesus in surprise. That sounded crazy! People fished on this lake only at night! But he replied, "Master, we worked hard all night trying to catch fish, but we caught nothing. But you say to put the nets in the water; so I will" (Luke 5:5, ICB). It made no sense, but Peter trusted anyway.

We will become disappointed or discouraged sometimes, just as the disciples did. We might be disappointed when we miss out on something fun, or when we get a bad grade in school. We might become discouraged when a friend doesn't want to follow Jesus. But Jesus will always love us very much. When we choose to keep following and trusting Him, good things will happen. Just wait and see!

Fast Facts:

- Fishing by boat on the Sea of Galilee was done only at night, as this is when the fish are close to the surface. During the day they swim deeper down, farther from the light.
- There were about 230 fishing boats on the lake in Jesus' day.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Why do you think Peter said he would do what Jesus asked him to?*

Pray: Ask Jesus to help you keep trusting and following Him when you are discouraged or disappointed.



THURSDAY

So Many Fish!

Peter's eyes bulged, and his mouth hung open in surprise! He had thrown his net into the water, just as Jesus had said. Now he and Andrew tried to pull in their net full of wiggling, squiggling fish, but it was way too heavy. In fact, it was breaking! And the boat was tilting . . . sinking . . . almost overturning! They called out for James and John to row their boat over and help.

With strong, quick strokes they soon arrived. Then their eyes bulged too—what a catch! Together the four fishermen loaded the slippery fish into both boats until they almost sank. Slowly, carefully, the disciples rowed to shore.

By the time they got there, Peter was no longer thinking about the fish or his boat. He had been amazed by the miracle, for it showed Jesus' power to control even nature. He felt sinful and ashamed of his doubt and discouragement when he compared himself to Jesus. He clung to Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8). Peter's clinging hands showed how much he wanted to be with Jesus, yet his words showed how sinful and unworthy he felt.

Jesus understood Peter's confused heart. What did He say? *Read Luke 5:10.*

A new mission! Jesus also gave these encouraging words: "Do not be afraid." Then Jesus called James, John, and Andrew too. So "they left everything and followed Jesus" (Luke 5:11, ICB).

Jesus had already called Andrew, John, and Peter to give Him their hearts and follow Him as a special friend. Now He called them to work with Him as close disciples. His miracle showed them that they didn't need to fish full time anymore to earn money. Instead, they could trust Jesus to provide for their needs. We can also follow Jesus and trust Him to care for us and fill our lives with His goodness.

Parent Faith Talk: Share how Jesus called you to follow Him, and what that means to you.

Do: Find the Sea of Galilee on the Bible map.

Pray: Tell God you love Him and want to continue to follow Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *What did Peter learn from Jesus that day?*
- *What have you learned from this amazing fishing story?*

FRIDAY

Disciples

Jesus had used fishermen's language when He called Peter, Andrew, and John for their new special task. They understood what He meant when He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Instead of catching fish, they would "catch people" and help them get to know Jesus.

Jesus knew how much He would need some special friends to help Him with His mission. They would learn from Jesus, and then help Him show the people what God is really like. These disciples were given the important work of calling others, just as Andrew called his brother Peter, and Philip called his friend Nathanael.

Jesus had 12 close disciples. One was Matthew. What did he do for a job, and how did Jesus call him? **Read Matthew 9:9.**

Can you name the other disciples? Check them in Matthew 10:2-4.

Jesus' disciples came from different jobs and different social groups and had very different personalities. Yet they all had two things in common: they knew how much Jesus loved them, and they chose to love Him back by following when He called.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How does it make you feel that Jesus loves being around all different types of people? Why?*
- *Do you think Jesus is calling you to follow Him too? How will you respond?*

Friday Night

Share and praise

- Use flashlights or candles to light up a darkened room as you recite your memory verse. Talk about what it means to follow Jesus, the "light of the world."
- As a family, brainstorm ways you could call others to follow Jesus. Plan to do one of your ideas. Alternatively, discuss ways your family could become involved in an outreach program your church is running.
- Sing "This Little Light of Mine" or another song about letting your light shine so that others can choose to follow Jesus.

Family Journal

- One thing I've learned that I didn't know before is that . . .
- What is God inviting me to do in this story?

Pray

Thank Jesus for loving you so much and for calling you to follow Him.



SABBATH

The Sabbath Truth

John Loughborough turned the pages of his Bible quickly. The Sundaykeeping preacher frowned as he searched for Bible texts to "prove" the Sabbath was wrong. He wrote down what he could, then went at once to listen to a new preacher, John Andrews, who was teaching people about the Sabbath. He fully expected to prove that the seventh-day Sabbath was the wrong day to worship God. But the exact opposite happened! He quickly became convinced that the Sabbath was the *right* day to worship. After listening to that sermon, John Loughborough began to keep the Sabbath.

Soon after, John had an opportunity to meet Ellen White. She told him that the Lord wanted him to spend his time preaching the Sabbath message. This was a BIG request for John. It would mean giving up his work. When he got home, he went alone to pray in his room. He asked God to open the way and show him if that was what God *really* wanted him to do.

For the next little while John's work didn't go well, since nobody was buying the door locks he sold. His wife burst into tears when she discovered they were down to their last three cents. She worried about how they would be able to support themselves if John went preaching. But while she was out buying matches and thread with the last of their money, a man ordered lots of door locks and paid for them all in cash! Now they had enough money for firewood, food, and their other needs.

John knew without a doubt that God had truly called him to preach about the Sabbath. He gladly followed God. For many years John Loughborough preached about the Sabbath, and many people followed God's call and became Sabbathkeepers too.

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For You, Parents: Jesus loves your children and is drawing their hearts to follow Him. He sees beautiful potential in them. "In every human being [Jesus] discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace. . . . Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust" (Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 80).

